

SPECIAL FEATURE NO. 3-1183
MATTHEW SCHNEDIER/LOS ANGELES

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ACADEMY SPECIAL NO. 9: THE SHORT FILM: T-HEE
(VOICED PIECE AND INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY IS MARKING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "OSCAR" -- THE GOLDEN STATUETTE AWARDED EACH YEAR FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VARIOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS OF FILMMAKING. IN COOPERATION WITH THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES, VOA IS LOOKING INTO TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN MOTION PICTURES IN A SERIES OF SPECIAL INTERVIEWS WITH PROMINENT HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS, TODAY'S REPORT, "THE SHORT FILM,"

TAPE: CUT ONE -- HEE

"THE DEFINITION OF A SHORT FILM FROM THE ACADEMY'S STAND-POINT IS, ONE THAT IS NO LONGER THAN THIRTY MINUTES IN COMPETITION WITH OTHER SHORT FILMS. AND IT CAN BE AS SHORT AS ONE MINUTE TO BE CONSIDERED. THE FILM MIGHT DEPEND ON THE SURPRISE ELEMENT. IT MIGHT DEPEND ON DRAMATIC IMPACT, HUMOR, IT MIGHT DEPEND ON ADVANCED TECHNIQUES, WHICH IS SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN RIFE OVER THE YEARS IN SHORT FILMS. AND TODAY, WHY TODAY, THE FEATURE FILMS ARE FULL OF EXPERIMENTATION LIKE 'STAR WARS' AND IN 'CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (OF THE THIRD KIND)."

VOICE: THE VOICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SHORT FILMS BRANCH OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES, A MAN WITH THE UNUSUAL NAME OF T. HEE. MR. HEE BELIEVES THAT THE SHORT FILM IS AN EXCELLENT TRAINING GROUND FOR HELPING MOST FILMMAKERS, ACHIEVE THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL, WORKING ON FULL LENGTH FEATURES.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- HEE

"I THINK ALMOST ALL OF THE STUDENTS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE -- STUDENTS OF FILM HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF LEARNING ABOUT FILMMAKING BY MAKING SHORTS BECAUSE THEY CAN MAKE MORE MISTAKES IN THE SHORT FILMS AND THEY WON'T BE AS EXTREME AS IF THEY STARTED TO MAKE A LIVE ACTION FILM THAT'S A FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILM. IT'S LIKE SIMPLE MUSICAL PATTERNS ON A PIANO-- THAT YOU JUST PICK OUT THE CERTAIN EASY CHORDS AND EASY SONGS TO PLAY, UNTIL LATER YOU'RE MORE ADEPT AND YOU CAN PLAY SYMPHONIC MUSIC, OR WHATEVER. IF I MAY USE THAT ANALOGY. IT'S A MATTER OF LEARNING WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH FILM."

VOICE: ALTHOUGH THE SHORT FILM IS NO LONGER AS WELL KNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS THE FULL LENGTH FEATURE, THE SHORT FILM HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE EARLIEST DAYS OF MOTION PICTURES.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- HEE

"SHORT FILMS GO WAY BACK INTO HISTORY WHERE THE TWO-REELERS WERE CONSIDERED SHORTS AT ONE TIME, AND THEN THE ONE-REELERS, AND THAT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LAUREL AND HARDY, THE HAL ROACH FILMS. AND CONSEQUENTLY, AFTER SOME TIME HAL ROACH MADE FULL LENGTH FEATURE FILMS WITH LAUREL AND HARDY. I BELIEVE (CHARLES) CHAPLIN ALWAYS MADE FULL LENGTH FILMS. NO, I BEG YOUR PARDON. HE HAD SOME SHORT FILMS TOO, IN THE BEGINNING. AND THEN HE WENT INTO FEATURE FILMS AS MONEY BECAME MORE AVAILABLE AND HIS STORIES HAD TO TAKE MORE TIME TO TELL."

VOICE: LACK OF MONEY TO FINANCE FILMS IS ONE RECURRENT THEME FOUND IN THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY. AND, ACCORDING TO T. HEE, SHORTAGE OF MONEY IS ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF SHORT FILMS PRODUCED.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- HEE

"SHORT FILMS ARE GENERALLY SHORT BECAUSE OF A LACK OF FINANCE. AND YOU JUST COULDN'T, WOULDN'T MAKE A SHORT FILM OR YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO MAKE A SHORT FILM AND SPEND THIRTEEN MILLION DOLLARS -- THERE'S NO POSSIBLE WAY OF YOUR EVER MAKING ONE THAT WAY. SHORT FILMS ARE REALLY A STEPPING STONE TO FEATURE FILMS AND THEY ARE EXPERIMENTATION, NO MATTER WHAT ELEMENT THEY CONCENTRATE ON."

VOICE: T. HEE BELIEVES THAT LACK OF MONEY IS A TWO-EDGED SWORD: ON ONE EDGE IS THE FACT THAT FEWER SHORT FILMS ARE BEING PRODUCED. THE OTHER EDGE, HOWEVER, HAS A POSITIVE EFFECT. IT STIMULATES THE FILMMAKER'S INGENUITY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF WHAT LITTLE MONEY IS AVAILABLE.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- HEE

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"THERE ARE SO MANY IDEAS THAT ARE EXPRESSED IN THE SHORT FILMS THAT ARE NEVER EXPRESSED IN FEATURE FILMS. NEW, INNOVATIVE, KIND OF VISUALIZATIONS, NEW GRAPHICS, NEW CHOREOGRAPHY, AND THINGS LIKE THAT, WHICH THEY (SHORT FILM

TAPE: PRODUCERS) HAVE AN EASIER TIME GETTING INTO WITHOUT SPENDING
(CONT'D) TREMENDOUS SUMS (OF MONEY) ON FEATURE LENGTH FILMS."

VOICE: SHORT FILMS WERE ONCE PRODUCED BY THE HUNDREDS. BUT DURING THE 1950S AND TO A GREATER DEGREE, THE 1960S, THE COST OF PRODUCING CLIMBED TOO HIGH TO GAMBLE ON A PROFIT, AT LEAST FOR THE MAJOR PRODUCERS. EVENTUALLY THE MAIN MARKET FOR SHORT FILMS SHIFTED TO THEATERS WHICH ATTRACT DEVOTED, BUT SMALL AUDIENCES, AND TO COLLEGE CAMPUSES.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- HEE

"IT BECAME VERY EXPENSIVE TO MAKE THE BETTER SHORT FILMS AND THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MAKING SHORT FILMS WENT INTO FEATURE FILMS. DISNEY FOR INSTANCE -- HE (THE STUDIO) DOESN'T MAKE SHORT FILMS ANY MORE. HE MADE MORE MONEY FOR THE FEATURE LENGTH FILMS THAN HE WOULD MAKE FROM THE SHORT FILMS. AND THE OTHER STUDIOS ALSO DID THE SAME THING. WARNER BROTHERS ELIMINATED SHORT FILMS FROM THEIR PLACE."

VOICE: BUT AS FAR AS T. HEE IS CONCERNED, THE SHORT FILM IS ABOUT TO BEGIN A RENAISSANCE -- A PROSPECT WHICH PLEASES HIM GREATLY.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- HEE

"THE AUDIENCE IS EVERYWHERE. IT'S (THERE'S) ABOUT TO BE A RENAISSANCE I THINK, OF INTEREST IN SHORT FILMS ALL OVER THE WORLD. FRANCE (THE FRENCH) PARTICULARLY ARE CRAZY ABOUT SHORT FILMS. AND WHAT WITH THE ADVENT OF ASIFA (ACRONYM FOR "ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL DU FILME D'ANIMATION), THE ASSOCIATION THAT SHOWS SHORT FILMS FROM ALL THE NATIONS EACH YEAR -- THEY HAVE A FESTIVAL. THIS INTERESTS THE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE UNIVERSITIES TO SEE THAT. AND NOT ONLY YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT LET'S SAY THE NOT SO YOUNG PEOPLE."

VOICE: T. HEE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SHORT FILMS BRANCH OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF SPECIAL REPORTS ON CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICAN FILMMAKERS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF "OSCAR," THE ANNUAL AWARD OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCE.